

10 QUIT SMOKING MYTHS



With more than 45 million adult smokers in the United States, it's important for smokers to sort facts from myth when it comes to quitting smoking. Here are 10 common **MYTHS** about quitting ... and the **TRUTH**:

1 OK, I smoke ... but at least I don't do drugs or drink and drive.

It's not that simple. While smoking cigarettes is legal, cigarettes cause approximately 443,000 deaths each year - that's more than AIDS, alcohol and drug abuse, fires, car accidents, suicides and homicides combined.

2 I only smoke light cigarettes, so they're less damaging to my health.

There is no such thing as a safe cigarette. People who switch to light cigarettes from regular cigarettes are likely to inhale the same amount of hazardous chemicals. Many smokers change their smoking patterns (smoke more of the cigarette, inhale more deeply or keep the smoke in their lungs longer) to compensate for the reduction of nicotine.

3 There's only one right way to quit smoking ... and you have to do it on your own.

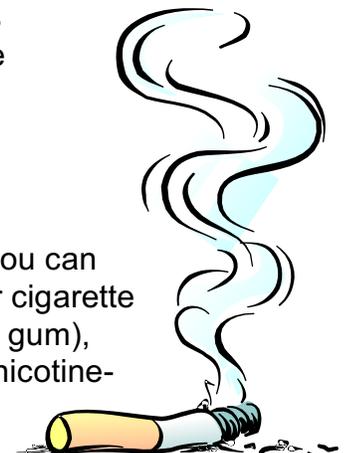
Just like different diets work for different people, there is more than one way to quit smoking. Nicotine replacement therapy, *Chantix* (blocks nicotine receptors in the brain), *Zyban* (a low dose of the antidepressant bupropion), individual or group counseling, on-line or telephone support can make it two to three times more likely that you'll be successful in quitting.

4 Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) is as harmful as cigarettes.

While nicotine is extremely addictive (for some people, it can be as addictive as heroin or cocaine), it has not been found to cause cancer. It is the additives in cigarettes and cigarette smoke that pose the greatest harm to smokers. Besides nicotine, cigarettes contain over 7,000 known chemicals ... and 70 are known carcinogens (cancer-causing chemicals).

5 If I quit smoking, I know I'll gain weight.

While some smokers who quit may gain weight, not everyone does. You can control your weight by choosing healthy, low calorie snacks to counter cigarette cravings (carrot sticks, celery stalks, grapes, hard candies or chewing gum), and increase your physical activity as your body adjusts to becoming nicotine-free. Exercise has the bonus of being a great stress buster too!



6 My smoking won't influence whether my kids smoke.

Though it's not always obvious, kids eventually take on the values and behaviors similar to their parents. Not only are children whose parents smoke more likely to smoke too, adolescents in households with at least one smoking parent are least likely to quit. On the "plus" side, young people are more likely to quit smoking if their parents quit smoking as well.

7 Quitting is expensive.

Treatment costs vary, and you should check with your health insurance plan to find out if smoking cessation medication and/or counseling are covered. Compare that with the \$2,500 that a pack-a-day smoker will spend each year on cigarettes.

8 I have to do this alone.

Help is available. You can:

- Call the toll free QuitLine at (866) NJ-STOPS (657-8677)
- Visit the QuitNet website at www.nj.quitnet.com
- Contact the Mercer County Tobacco QuitCenter at (609) 396-7707

9 I can't quit NOW because ... (you fill in the blank).

Quitting is hard. Everyone has a reason why they don't need, or want, to quit smoking today. Quitting smoking does require a commitment, some planning, changes in your everyday routine, support and self-discipline. Pick a "Quit Date" to prepare yourself and your environment for going smoke free.

10 If I can't quit the first time I try, I'll never be able to quit.

Remember, quitting is hard. Don't be discouraged - many people will quit 5-7 times before being able to quit for good. You can do it ... beginning in 2002, the number of former smokers has exceeded the number of current smokers!



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